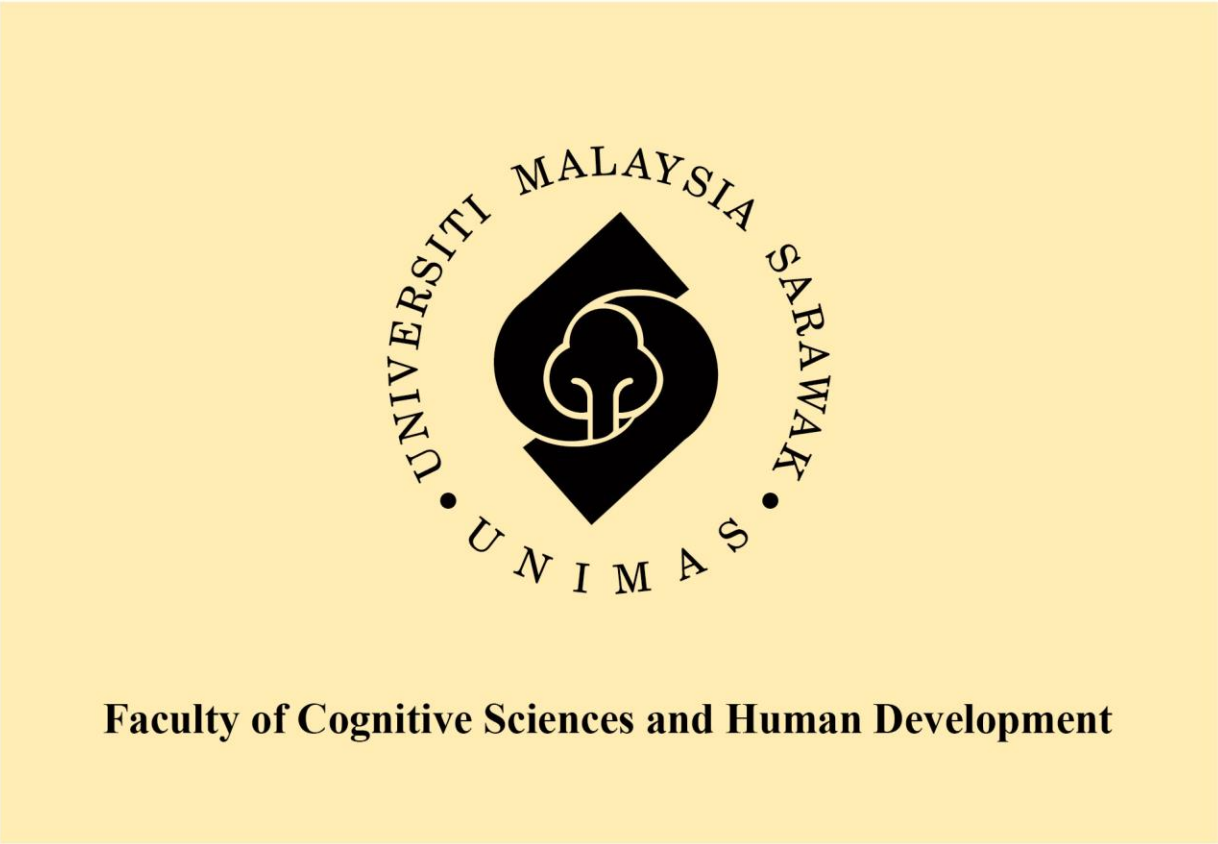


ADIBAH BINTI MOHD RAZALI

BSc Hons (CogSc) 2020



**THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET ADDICTION ON  
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: A STUDY AMONG UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS**

**Adibah binti Mohd Razali**

**Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science)  
2020**

**UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK**

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_A-\_\_\_\_\_

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Final Year Project Report ☒

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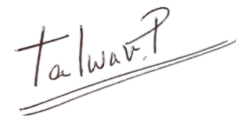
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## **ABSTRACT**

This quantitative study investigates the relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being that based on gender. The key variables were measures using two different tests: Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and Psychological Well-Being Test. One hundred and twenty participants over the age of 19 until 27. The empirical results demonstrate a statistically significant, negative correlation between internet addiction and psychological well-being. Gender was found to be negatively correlated with both internet addiction and psychological well-being.

# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 Introduction

Internet is an instrument of technology that has become a very important part of daily life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which makes our life easier and has become an indispensable part of it while its number of user population increases faster each day (Isman & Dabaj, 2004; Yapici & Akbayin, 2012). The internet provides functional resources such as entertainment, online shopping, social sharing applications that allow easier and faster access to knowledge. Not only has it become the world's source of information, but it has also become the quickest means of communication even people from different countries have the ability in a very short time to connect. Internet gaming disorder which is commonly referred to as usage disorder, internet addiction or addiction to gaming is a pattern of repetitive and sustained internet gaming that results in the cluster of cognitive and behavioral symptoms including a gradual loss of gambling control, sensitivity, and withdrawal symptoms similar to a substance use disorder. As with substance-related illness, through a lack of other tasks, individuals with internet addiction continue to sit on a computer and participate in gaming activities. The internet has an overall negative effect on everyday life and a break in the psychological well-being of the individual which there have studies of the reasons for the internet addiction showed that features such as depression, anxiety, stress (Akin & İskender, 2011), lower self-esteem and life satisfaction (Ko, Yen, Chen et al., 2005), and low in academic performance (Akhter, 2013). Well-being is a healthy and stable condition that makes it possible for people, communities, and nations to succeed and mental well-being to flourish. It is a combination of good feeling and efficient functioning (F. Huppert & Baylis, 2005). Students with higher internet dependence are more likely to have low psychological well-being (Cardaks, 2013).

DSM IV codes include the term "very high dependency need or compulsion". Goldberg (1996) first coined the definition of internet addiction and, following the requirements of DSM IV addiction, it was described as "very strong desire or urge to use the internet" (Aboujaoude et al., 2006; (Block, 2008; Korkeila et al., 2010). There are notable differences between the normal use of the internet and the addicted or problematic use of the internet (Petersen et al., 2009; Young, 1998). Normal internet users use this technology to meet their everyday needs and/or other needs (Kesici, and Sahin, 2009), and they can control themselves while using it, and when they don't have internet access, they show normal behaviors (Dinicola, 2004; Young, 1998). On the other hand, internet users with disabilities or pathologies (Milani et al., 2009) are in excessive mental activity, constantly thinking of the internet, dreaming of internet activities, and thinking of the next planned internet activity (Kimberly S Young, 1998); feel the need to use the internet more frequently to get the satisfaction they want, failure to control, reduce or abandon their use of the internet (Widyanto and Griffiths, 2007); feel uncomfortable, tired or angry if their use of the internet is limited or cut off completely (Petersen et al., 2009); spend more time on the internet than expected, have family, college, work and friends problems (Aboujaoude et al., 2006; Caplan, 2002; Hur, 2006; Smahel et al., 2012); risk or lose educational or carrier opportunities (Smahel et al., 2012); tell lies to their family members, friends, teachers, therapist and others (Milani et al., 2009); and use the internet to avoid issues or negative feelings like desperation, guilt, exhaustion, and worry (Whang et al., 2003). Research on the causes of internet addiction found that characteristics such as shyness, depressive symptoms, and low self-esteem (Aydin & Sari, 2011) were attributed to internet addiction tendencies (Yang & Tung, 2007). Besides, social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, online games and online gambling are causing an increase in the number of cases of internet addiction and it is estimated that internet addiction will become a serious problem soon (Andreassen et al., 2012; Harfuch et al. 2010; Teke, 2011).

Web addiction has received more coverage because of its controversial nature and the potential to increase a new type of compulsive behavior (Mythily, Qiu, & Winslow, 2008). According to Chebbi, Koong, and Liu (2000), Internet addiction is a contemporary epidemic, with easy access to desktop and online information. On the other hand, addiction to the Internet can be described as an impulse disorder. Besides, some of the features of this problem mimic gambling of anatomy. A research was conducted by Orzack (1999) and found people with simple boredom, isolation, nervousness, depression, and other addictions are vulnerable to internet addiction (as stated in Chebbi et al. 2000). However, according to the researchers, they said internet addicts can develop many types of disorder and Internet Addiction Disorder (IDA) is one of the disorders common to modern-day. Individuals with IDA may develop symptoms such as disadvantages, and face similar consequences for alcohol dependency, gambling, shopping, or other compulsive behaviors. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) are the two main treatments used to support people with this disorder. Young (1998 ) identified seven reasons for IDA, including marital dissatisfaction, work-related tension, financial issues, insecurity, depression, life difficulties and restricted social life (as cited in Chebbi et al. 2000).

Well-being research has been categorized in two ways, as reported by (Ryan and Deci, 2001). For well-being study, researchers identified hedonic and eudaimonic approaches. Hedonic well-being refers to studying satisfaction and describing well-being in terms of experiencing pleasure and preventing pain, while eudaimonic well-being is defined by concentrating on sense and functioning level of life and human potential. The word eudaimonic derives from "Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle (1947), which notes that pleasure, is the best of all goods attainable by human action" (Ryff, 1989). But there are also other perspectives, such as Waterman's, that criticize this direct connection. Waterman (1984) believed that eudaimonia is more precisely described as "the feelings that accompany behavior in the direction of one's true potential and compatible with it" (as cited in Ryff, 1989). Besides, Ryff and Singer (2008) analyzed the work of Aristotle and concluded that he

regarded not only the pleasures and pain of the body but also the self-fulfillment and development. Besides, Deci and Ryan (2008) believed that well-being could not be viewed as a result, but it should be regarded as a eudaimonic-point self-fulfillment process. While hedonic and eudaimonia are separate concepts, these two concepts are not independent at all when considered in the context of well-being. Waterman, Schwartz, and Conti (2008) emphasized that they also experience hedonic satisfaction as individuals experience eudaimonia when growing their potential. In other words, even though hedonic happiness is not a sufficient requirement for eudaimonia, eudaimonia leads to hedonic happiness.

## **1.2 Background of study**

When part of our daily lives, the Internet is being incorporated because the use of the Internet has expanded explosively throughout the world. Homes, universities, colleges, internet cafe, and libraries are the areas that are now more internet accessible. The common online activities are completing schoolwork, playing online games, reading and writing emails, and engaging in real-time chatting. At the same time, the internet harms daily life and a split in university students' psychological well-being. According to Young and Rogers (1998) psychological and environmental factors in the lives of college students can leave them disproportionately vulnerable to internet addiction. Young (2004) stated that the possible reasons are the students have huge blocks of unstructured time, the schools and universities have free and unlimited internet access, students between the ages of 18 and 22 are for the first time out of parental control without anyone monitoring or censoring what they say or do online, young students experience new difficulties in adapting to university life and finding new friends, and often end up seeking partnerships using different internet applications, students are completely encouraged by teachers and administrators to use the various internet applications, teens are best equipped to use the various applications of technical innovations and, in particular, the internet, students wish to escape from university stress caused by their duty to pass exams, write essays and complete their degrees with fair marks within

the prescribed time period, and finally students feel that university life is disconnected from social activities, and when they complete their studies, the job market with all its complexities is an environment in which they have to compete and find a job. Kraut et al. (1998) found that heavy internet use harms face-to-face experiences by increasing the amount of time spent with friends and family members, contributing to increased isolation and depression, thereby decreasing psychological well-being (PWB). Previous studies have documented the internet's negative effect on their daily lives and a split in young adults' PWB such research identified well-being in the context of mental illness and anxiety like solitude and depression (Whang et al., 2003) behavioral difficulties, impulsiveness, the desire for pleasure and novelty, and social isolation (K. S. Young & Rodgers, 1998). Similarly, the Oktuğ study reported well-being as a damaged condition such as missing sleep, failure to control time, missing meals, and similar trends and expectations of other addictions. Similarly, the Oktuğ (2012) study reported well-being as a damage condition such as failure to control time, missing sleep, missed meals, and similar trends and expectations of other addictions. But, a positive correlation between internet use and well-being has been documented in another study that increased internet use leads to better interaction and greater social participants, resulting in an enhanced sense of well-being (Kraut et al., 2002). The present study was therefore conducted to find out the relationship between internet addiction and PWB among college students.

### **1.3 Problem statements**

The Internet is a handy tool and for everyone, especially young people, it is part of everyday life. They gain information, connect, and become active members of the online community around the world. Besides, the Internet offers many entertainments, information, search, and mailing opportunities. Internet users conduct online shopping, transactions with public services and banks, and engage in programs for distance learning, but also generally improve working conditions. The Internet is an integral part of adolescents' everyday lives at all levels in a globalized society. (Zhang et al., 2015). In another word a student nowadays uses the internet not just limited for their study

because most of the materials like lecture notes, books, assignments, and quizzes are online which the main priority is but students also need internet for other things (online games, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, and etc.) which already being a part of their life. Research has revealed a growing trend which is internet use by adolescents can create negative internet risk and mental distress issues (Leung & Lee, 2012). A recent review of problematic internet use (PIU) has indicated its profound impact on well-being, interpersonal relationships, and daily functioning between adolescents (Anderson et al., 2017).

## **1.4 Objectives**

General objective:

- To study the relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being among university students in UNIMAS.

Specific objectives:

- To determine the demographic profile among university students.
- To study the relationship between internet addiction and gender among university students.
- To study the relationship between psychological well-being and gender among university students.
- To find the relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being among university students.

## **1.5 Research hypothesis**

- There is no relationship between internet addiction and gender among university students.
- There is no relationship between psychological well-being and gender among university students.
- There is no significant relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being among university students.

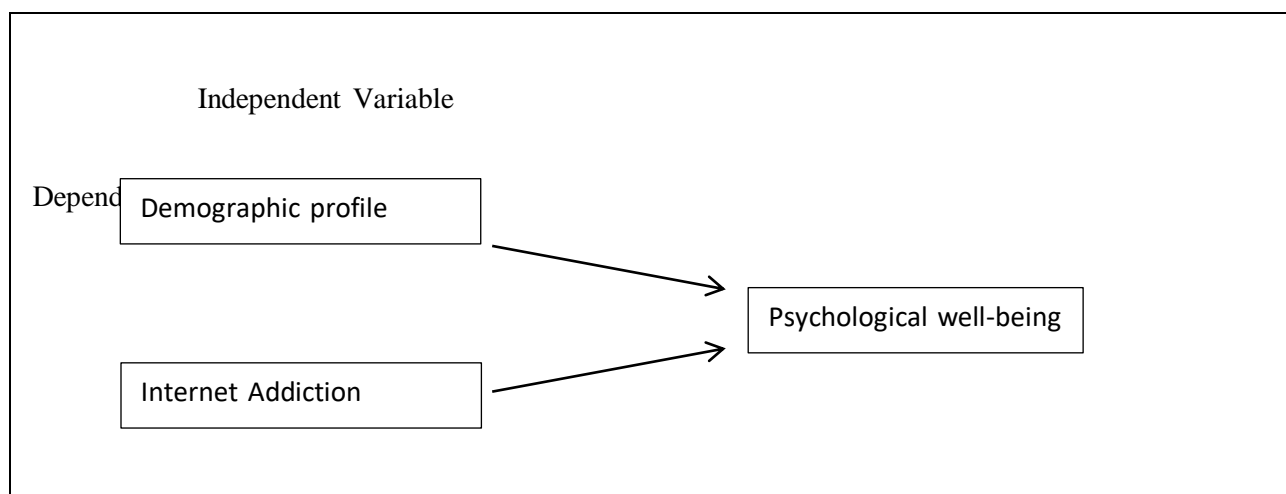
## 1.6 Conceptual framework

A variable is a measurable trait varying in population. Variable is composed of two dependent and independent variable sort. An independent variable was a hypothesized cause or influence of a variable dependent on it. The dependent variable does not usually cause changes to the independent variable or affect it. After the purpose of the study has been established the independent and dependent variable can be calculated.

The conceptual framework for the research was to be determined the internet addiction and demographic profile that influences psychological well-being. There are made of two independent variables which are internet addiction and demographic profile.

The dependent variable is the variable that is affected by the control variable. This variable was measured to determine the effect of the control variable. In this research, the dependent variable used is the psychological well-being of students.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**





## 1.7 Definition of terms

Terms	<i>Conceptual Definition</i>	<i>Operational Definition</i>
Internet Addiction	Internet addiction is when a person has a compulsive internet activity that interferes with normal functioning and causes stress to users as well as their friends, families, and loved ones (Padwa & Cunningham, 2010).	Internet addiction is a mental condition marked by the overuse of the Internet, usually at the user's expense.
Psychological Well-Being	Psychological well-being is about living well, which is the result of feeling good and working effectively (Huppert, 2009)	Psychological well-being consists of positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a sense of purpose and meaning in life, and personal development and growth.

## **1.8 Limitation of study**

Some limitations have been found in this research. Little research is known for studying internet addiction among university students that influenced on psychological well-being. This research mainly emphasis on the gender difference in the relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being. So, other factors associated with the effect of gender and internet addiction on psychological well-being will not be accepted. Besides, respondents were selected randomly which might be biased towards a certain aspect. Those some aspects might be their courses or their ages.

## **1.9 Significance of study**

The research is designed to explore the impact of psychological well-being on internet addiction. This study is knowledgeable and can be used by researchers as more data on internet addiction can be included in the literature page, providing adequate advice and guidance, and filling in knowledge gaps. Besides, the knowledge and information given can provide understanding, concise and wide-ranging overviews to government, teachers, health staff, parents, and community with the emerging on-line addiction issue. However, this study's findings may help prevent internet addiction.

## **Summary**

This chapter has discussed the background of the research, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, conceptual framework, definitions of terms, the significance of the study, and scope of the study. The objective of this research was mainly to investigate the factors that affect stress among university students in UNIMAS. The result of the research would reveal whether to accept or reject the finding of past research. The next chapter would discuss the importance of concepts, findings, and theoretical findings and evidence-based from literature findings.

## **CHAPTER 2**

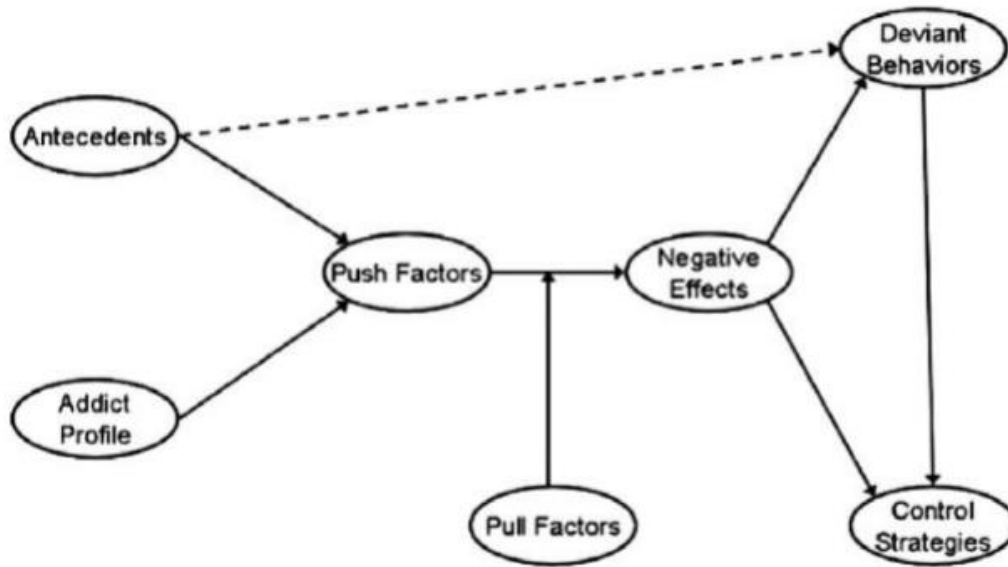
### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework of Internet Addiction**

Some theories on the topic need to be examined to understand how problematic Internet use leads to psychological problems or why people are suffering from psychological disorders. It has been suggested that several theories explain the reasons for using the Internet. The social skill model (Caplan, 2005), cognitive-behavioral theory (Davis, 2001), and social cognitive theory (LaRose et al., 2003) could be used. Biases in the perceptions of individuals and memory processes associated with Internet use are the causes of Internet addiction, according to cognitive-behavioral theory (N. B. Serin, 2011). It does not simply define problem Internet use as a behavioral addiction, but also as a cognitive-behavioral condition with serious adverse effects on one's life. One of the leading theories on Internet addiction is Davis' (2001) proposed cognitive-behavioral theory of pathological internet use among various cognitive-behavioral models. According to Davis (2001), people with obsessive thoughts are beginning to accept the Internet as a 'friend,' and this in turn triggers problematic behavior (Yellowlees & Marks, 2007). Grohol (2019) uses the cognitive-behavioral approach to describe Internet addiction. They focus on 'compulsive behavior' and its 'treatment' rather than exploring the essence of the addiction. Problematic use of the Internet is defined as a multidimensional condition that leads to negative social, academic and, professional outcomes and symptoms of cognitive behavior (Caplan, 2005). Behavioral theories state that through the learning process (classical conditioning and operant conditioning) environmental events determine human behavior. According to classical conditioning, behavior in the use of the Internet is believed to be repeatedly combined with certain emotional experiences and or environmental indications and thus form an association with these factors. As such, while individuals are exposed to Internet use in similar surroundings and experiences, they may want to use the Internet automatically or

unconsciously. According to operant conditioning, internet browsing can produce several beneficial effects like acceptance, relaxed feeling, reduction of anxiety, avoidance of signs of withdrawal, and negative emotions disappearance. Under this principle, all of these desirable consequences can reinforce the behavior of Internet use and ultimately lead to Internet addiction (Beard, 2005; Serin, 2011).

(Douglas et al., 2008), an internet addiction conceptual model is proposed. This concludes that the overuse of the internet is generally defined by a person or so calls the push factor's inner need and motivations. This model notes that medium or pull factor perceived attractive features balance the relationship between push factors and the extent of internet overuse negative effects. Negative effects of Internet addiction disorder may not only include academic, social, political, occupational, and physical impacts but may also apply to specific deviant behaviors. Nonetheless, the realization by the person of the Internet addiction disorder issue may make it possible to absorb control strategies to curb addiction, a correlation is also suggested between the deviant behaviors and the constructs of control strategies, as the reviewed studies provide evidence that subjects are grappling with the compulsion of online criminal activity and also suggested that some people are more likely to follow deviant online behaviors than others; thus, a direct link between the precedents and the structures of deviant behaviors is proposed.



**Figure 2: Theoretical framework of Internet Addiction**

## 2.2 Psychological Well-Being

The most significant model for psychological well-being is the Ryff (2014) model. Ryff (1989) developed that model. Ryff (2014) searched for building blocks in a variety of wellness theories and studies from Aristotle to John Stuart Mill, from Abraham Maslow to Carl Jung, to develop a theory that incorporates metaphysical concerns with empirical empiricism. Therefore, Ryff (2014 ) defined these recurrences and convergences diverse hypotheses and those intersections laid the groundwork for her new wellness pattern. The psychological wellbeing model by Ryff (2014) acknowledges that the psychological wellbeing as a holistic cycle of growth is spread across life (Khanbani et al . 2014). Ryff and Burton (2008) note that psychological health is a vital element of faith that gives meaning and purpose in life. Besides this, the feeling is correlated with common goals in life, meaning, and expectations and having a sense in direction and orientation.

(Bradburn, 1969) conducted a pioneering study of psychological well-being. Bradburn used happiness interchangeable psychological well-being and mentioned two dimensions that are positive and negative. High in mental well-being from this point of view represents the dominance of positive

over negative effects. Bradburn stressed that while positive and negative effects are independent of each other, the frequency of both positive and negative effects determines the psychological well-being level. Besides, Bradburn excluded concepts of self-actualization, autonomy, and self-esteem, although the researcher accepted these concepts as tree species in the psychological wellness forest. Although Bradburn did not ignore concepts such as autonomy and self-esteem, and this study is considered to be one of the pioneers of psychological well-being studies, the emphasis on positive and negative impact can be interpreted as what Bradburn studied was subjective well-being rather than psychological well-being, taking into account the definitions of subjective and psychological well-being.

Later, Ryff (1989) developed a six-dimensional theory to define psychological well-being. Keyes and Ryff (1998) said the theory analyzed psychological well-being from a eudemonic perspective and combined the theories of psychological functioning which are Maslow's self-actualization conception, Rogers' fully functioning person, Jung's individualization formation, and Allport's portrayal of maturity. Also included were the concepts of Erikson, Buhler, and Neugarten on adult development as well as the mental health philosophy of Jahoda. Ryff's theory's six dimensions are self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, independence, control of the world, life meaning, and personal growth. Self-acceptance defines how an individual recognizes positive and negative aspects of his personality and is pleased with past experiences, according to Ryff's theory. Self-acceptance is considered as a psychological well-being aspect since it is recognized as one of the conditions needed for mental health (Jahoda), self-actualization (Maslow), optimum functioning (Rogers) and maturity (Allport) because the ability to love (Jahoda), feel empathy (Maslow), build hot relationships (Roger) and feel responsible to others (Erikson) are seen as facets of positive functioning, positive relationships with others have become one of the six dimensions.

### **2.2.1 Self-acceptance**

- High self-acceptance: You have a positive about yourself, including respecting yourself and recognizing various facets of yourself that including good and bad qualities.
- Low self-acceptance: You feel dissatisfied with yourself; you are frustrated with what happened in your life; you are worried about other personal qualities, and you want to be different from what you are.

### **2.2.2 Positive Relations with Others**

- Strong positive relations: You have warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; you are concerned about others' welfare; you are capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy, and understand human relationships' gift and acceptance.
- Weak positive relations: You have few closes, trusting relationships with others; find it hard to be warm, open and concerned about others; are isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships, and are unwilling to make compromises to sustain important ties with others.

### **2.2.3 Autonomy**

- High autonomy: You are self-determining and independent; you can resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; you can regulate behavior from within, and you can assess yourself by personal standards.
- Low autonomy: You are concerned with other people's perceptions and assessments; you depend on others' opinions to make critical decisions, and you adhere to societal pressures to think and behave in some ways.

### **2.2.4 Environmental Mastery**

- High environmental mastery: You have a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controlling the complex array of external activities; making effective

use of surrounding opportunities, and being able to select or create contexts appropriate to your personal needs and values.

- Low environmental mastery: You have trouble handling daily affairs; feel helpless to alter or enhance social contexts; are unaware of opportunities around them, and lack a sense of control over the outside world.

### **2.2.5 Purpose in Life**

- Strong purpose in life: You have aspirations in life and a sense of direction; believe your current and past life has meaning; hold values that offer purpose to life; and have ambitions and aspirations to achieve.
- Weak purpose in life: You lack a sense of meaning in life; you have few goals or objectives, you lack a sense of direction; you don't see the purpose of your past life; and you don't have any outlook or beliefs that give meaning to life.

### **2.2.6 Personal Growth**

- Strong personal growth: You have a feeling of constant development; see yourself as increasing and expanding; are open to new experiences; have a sense of realizing your potential; see self-improvement and action over time; adapt in ways that represent more self-knowledge and efficiency.
- Weak personal growth: You have a sense of personal stagnation; lose the sense of change or expansion over time; feel depressed and uninterested in life, and feel incapable of doing so develop new habits or behaviors.

## **2.3 Level of Internet Addiction in adolescent**

According to Pallanti, Bernardi, and Quercioli (2006), addiction to the Internet can be found at any age and in any social condition, but most research is carried out focused on adolescents, as adolescents appear to be a critical period of vulnerability to addiction. Van Rooij and Van den